The Muslim Creed - 'Aqeedatut-Tahaawiyyah

﴿ العقيدة الطحاوية ﴾

[English – إنجليزي]

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IslamHouse.com

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Prologue

All Praise be to Allah, the Cretor of the worlds. The learned authority on Islam, Abu Ja'far AI- Warraq AI-Tahawi of Egypt (May Allah have mercy upon him) said:

This is an exposition of the beliefs Of Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'h in accordance with the way of the jurists Of Islam: Abu Hanifa al-Nu'man bin thabit Al-kufi, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub bin Ibrahim AI-Ansari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin AI-Hasan Al-Shaibani (May Allah be pleased with them all) and this is what they believe about the fundamentals of the religion and the belief they profess about the Creator of the worlds.

By the grace of Allah, this what we say about the Tawheed[1] (unity) of Allah:

On Tawheed (Oneness of Allah)

1- Allah is one and has no partners at all.

2- Nothing in the whole universe is similar to Him.

3- Nothing can surpass or outreach Him.

4- No one is worthy to be worshipped except Him.

5- He is Qadeem[2] with no beginning and Eternal with no end.

6.- He will never die nor perish.

7.- Nothing happens in this universe except with His will.

8.- No conjecture or thinking can perceive His real essence.

9.-He does not resemble any of His creatures.

10.- He is alive; death will not overtake Him. He is the protector; in no need of sleep at all.

11.- He is the Creator of the whole universe but He is in no need of it. He feeds all without difficulty.

12.- He makes all taste death with no fear. He will resurrect them all without any difficulty.

13.- Since eternity He has been there with all His attributes. He has always had these attributes and will always have these attributes. They did not increase after He brought His creatures into existence because they have always been there.

14.- He was not the Creator (Khaliq) after He had created His creatures and neither was He the Designer (Al-Bari) after He had designed the universe.

15.- He was The Nourisher (Rabb) before there was anyone to nourish and The Creator (Khaliq) before He had created anyone.

16.- Although He is entitled to be called The Resurrector after giving life to the dead, He deserves this title even before the resurrection. Similarly, He deserves to be called The Creator even before He gave life to anyone.

17.- He has power over everyone; everyone is in complete need of Him. He can do whatever He likes easily and is in no need of anything.

18.- Allah Almighty created all consciously.

19.- He estimated for each of His creatures what it needed (Known as Taqdir or predestination).

20.- He planned the end of every creature.

21.- Nothing was hidden from Him even before He brought His creatures into existence. He knew beforehand whatever His creatures would do in their lives.

22.- Allah Almighty commands His people to obey Him and forbids them from disobeying.

23.- Everything in this universe is bound to His will. What He wills occurs; what He does not will, could never happen.

24.- Allah Almighty guides whom He likes. He protects everyone out of His kindness. On the firm ground of justice and equity He disgraces or withholds His guidance or places in trials whoever He likes.

25.- All people are under His rule in this world; their lives are governed by His generosity and kindness at one one end and His justice at the other.

26.- He is above all partners and equals.

27.- No one can change His preordained decisions and neither can His orders be delayed. No one can overshadow His decisions. .

28.- We have complete faith in Him. We believe that everything happens due to Him.

On Muhammad (PBUH)

29.- Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is undoubtedly His most exalted creature, His most beloved Messenger and a chosen Prophet.

30.- He is the last of the Prophets, Imam of all pious people, the Master of all the Messengers and the most beloved to the Creator of this universe.

31.- Any claim to prophethood after Him is ignorance and infidelity.

32.- He is commissioned to both jinns and human beings and to the entire universe with a message of truth, guidance and light.

On The Glorious Qur'aan

33- The Quran, undoubtedly, is the word of Allah. It reveals the sayings of Allah. Allah Almighty revealed this Book to His Messenger. The believers testify to it as the whole truth with a firm faith that it is the word of Allah and that it is not a created thing like the words of the creatures themselves. Whoever listens to this Book and thinks that it is a word of a human being, commits infidelity. Allah Almighty condemns such a person and threatens him with chastisement in the Hell- fire.

"Soon will I cast him into Hell-Fire. " (74:26) in reply to the one who said about the Book of Allah: "This is nothing but the word of a mortal." (74:25)

We believe that the Quran is the word of the Creator of the human beings. It does not resemble the words of human beings.

34.- Whoever compares the attributes of Allah to those of human beings, commits infidelity. Anyone who thinks deeply and escapes the onslaught of the thinking of the infidels, will certainly realise that the attributes of Allah have no resemblance at all to those of a human being.

35.- The dwellers of Paradise will see their Lord in accordance with the Quranic saying:

'Some faces that day will beam (in brightness an beauty) Looking towards their Lord' (75:22-23).

'How this will happen is known to Allah Almighty. The above verse should be understood in a manner akin to Allah's will and knowledge. The best explanation in this regard is that of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) himself as narrated in some authentic Ahadith. We must have no consideration for our own will or desire in this issue. A man is safe

as long as he refers back to Allah and His Messenger. Whenever in doubt he should try to consult a man of learning.

36.- Whoever does not concede to the evidences produced by the Book and the Sunnah is no longer a Muslim. A man who indulges in the fundamentals of faith without proper knowledge and does not submit himself to these two sources, will remain deprived of true faith, of understanding of the religion and of pure belief in the Oneness of Allah. Instead he will find himself swinging between faith and infidelity, belief and unbelief, submission and denial. He will always be confused and doubtful. He will neither be a believer who has a strong faith, nor a disbeliever who rejects wholeheartedly.

37.- To imagine Allah in a certain form is not correct. The safest way for a Muslim is to believe in all the attributes of Allah without adding any interpretation. To negate the attributes of Allah altogether or to compare Him to someone, is a deviation from the right path. Our Lord is unique and without any equal at all.

38.- Allah Almighty is above all limits and anthropomorphic descriptions. Unlike other things He is not bound by the six directions.[3]

On Mi'raj

39- Mi'raj (The Prophet's night journey to heaven) is true. Allah Almighty took His Prophet while he was awake on a splendid journey. Then his ascension took place in flesh. Allah took him as high as He wanted him in all respect and glory.

'So did Allah convey the inspiration to His servant (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey'. 'The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw'. (53: 10-11)

May Allah shower His blessing and mercy upon him in this world and in the Hereafter.

On Kauthar

40.- The pool of Kauthar is true. Allah Almighty will let the Ummah quench its thirst from this exalted pool.

On Intercession

41.- The intercession (Shafa'a) for this Ummah by the Prophet is true in accordance with a number of Ahadith.

On The Covenant

42.- The pledge that Allah took from Syyedina Adam (A.S.) and his descendants is true. Note.. Refer to verse No. 172 of Sura A'raf which is as follows:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam From their loins - their descendants and made the testify concerning themselves saying: "A m I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)? - They said.. Yea, we do testify" This lest you should say on the Day of Judgement. 'Of this we were never mindful'or lest you shouldsay: 'Our fathers before us took false gods but we are (their) descendants after them: will Thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who followed falsehood. "(7:172-173)

On Taqdir

43.- Allah Almighty has known since eternity those who will enter Paradise and those who will go to the Hell-Fire. No increase or decrease in this divine knowledge will occur at all.

44.- Allah Almighty knows all the actions that the people will undertake. The actions that are destined for each individual will be made easier to him. Actions are valued according to their ends. Fortunate is the one whose Taqdir is in his favour and wretched is the on whose Taqdir falls against him.

45.- Taqdir is a secret placed by Allah Almighty among His creatures which is not known even by any close angel or by a Messenger. The more you think about it, the more you will find yourself depressed, deprived and arrogant. This is why a Muslim should abstain from thinking deeply about it. Allah has withdrawn the knowledge of Taqdir from His creatures and forbade them from arguing about it. He says: "He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned for theirs". By asking 'why did Allah do this?' a man rejects one of the injuctions of the Quran and whoever does this, enters the rank of the infidels.

46.- Only the friends of Allah whose hearts are lit by a light of Allah, believe in the Shari'a practically and dogmatically as revealed from Allah. People with deep knowledge receive such status. Knowledge is of two kinds: (i)- Knowledge of the present (i.e. that of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet). (ii) - Knowledge of the absent (i.e. that of Taqdir which is hidden from the creatures).[4] To deny the knowledge of the present and to claim to have knowledge of the absent amount to infidelity. A man's faith is strengthened by accepting what is present and leaving aside what is absent.

47.-We believe in the pen and the tablets and whatever is associated with the writing Of Taqdir. What Allah has decreed must happen even though all the creatures may try their best to stop it happening. Similarly, if Allah has decreed for anything not to happen, it will never happen though all the creatures will try their utmost to do it. Allah has decreed whatever is going to happen until the Day of Judgement. Allah's decree will never fail. Whoever does wrong, would never have been able to do otherwise. And Whoever does right, would never have been able to do wrong.

48.- Let all the People know that whatever happens in this universe is known to Allah before it happens. No one can change or Overrule or increase or decrease whatever is decreed by Him. To believe in these facts indicates a firm belief, recognition of truth and well awareness of the oneness of Allah.

Allah says: "It is He who created all things and ordered them in due proportions". (25:2)

"And the command of Allah is a decree' determined." (33:38)

A man subjects himself to destruction by unknowingly disputing on the issue of Taqdir, in a vain pursuit of the hidden knowledge through superstition and conjecture and ends up eventually as a liar and forger.

On The Throne And Chair

49.- 'The Divine Throne ('Arsh) and Chair (Kursi) are true.

50.-Allah Almighty is in no need of the Throne or anything beyond it.

51.-Allah Almighty is above everything. He dominates them all. Nothing can surpass Him.

On The Status Of Ibraheem and Moosa

52.- We believe wholeheartedly that Allah Almighty declared Sayyidina Ibrahim (A.S.) as His Khalil (friend) and Sayyidina Musa (A.S.) as His Kalim (speaking directly to Him).

On The Books Of Allah

53.- We believe in all those books which were revealed to the Prophets and the Messengers of Allah and bear witness that all of them spoke the truth.

Muslim And Mu'min

54.- We hold all those who tum their faces to the Ka'ba as Muslims and Mu'min as long as they accept the Shari'a of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and all of his sayings with an open heart.

55.- We do not indulge in discussions about the essence of Almightly Allah, nor do we dispute in the matters of religion.

56.- We do not dispute concerning the words and meanings of the Quran. We bear witness that the Quran is the word of Allah Almighty . The Archangel Jibrail brought it to

Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), the master of the messengers, through revelation. There is no doubt that it is the word of Allah. The words of human beings can ,ever equal it, and we do not regard it as a created thing. We do not disgrace with the Muslim Ummah' in any Of these issues.

57.- We do not declare anyone from among the Muslims as an infidel because of a sin unless the Person believes that it is not a sin. [5]

58.- We do not believe that if a man has faith, his sins will not affect him.

59.- We hope that Allah Almighty will forgive all those who were good in their actions (i.e. Muhsinin) and will them enter Paradise out of his mercy. We are hopeful of this but we do not testify that they will definitely enter Paradise. [6]

We seek forgiveness for all those who do wrong. Although we are scared of their end, we do not allow for despair either.

60.- Being regardless Of the punishment of Allah or despairing of the mercy of Allah forces a person out of the pale of Islam. The people of the Qibla should adopt a middle way betwen those extremes.

61.- A man does not come out of the bond of faith until he denies all that made him enter the faith originally. [7]

62.- Iman(i.e. faith) has to be announced verbally and testified in the heart.[8]

63.- All authentically reported commandments of the Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) are true.

64.- The essence of faith is one.[9] All faithful are the same as far as the fundamental of faith is concerned. However, they vary in ranks due to the variation in their fear of Allah and in their rejection of lust and desire and in keeping with the most preferable duties.

65.- All believers are the friends of Rahman (Allah). The most respected among them in the eyes of Allah are those who obey and follow the Quran the most.-

66.- Faith includes belief in Allah and His Angels. His Books, His Messengers, The Last Day, Taqdir and that good or bad, sweet or sour, are all from Him.

On The Messengers

67.- We believe in all the above mentioned. We do not differentiate among the Messengers of Allah. We believe that all that they preached was true.

68.- The people who committed major sins (i.e. Kaba'ir) from among the followers of the Prophet Muhammed(PBUH) will not remain in Hell-fire forever, provided that they die on Tawheed, although they had not repented. Such people who met their Lord as faithful will be subject to the will of Allah and His decision. If He wills, He will forgive them and pardon them out of His Grace, as He says in His book:

"He forgiveth anything else (except Shirk), to who He pleaseth". (4:48)

But if He wills, He will punish them in the Hell-fire out of His justice and later release them out of mercy and due to the intercessions made by obedient servants. He will then let them enter Paradise. This is because Allah Almighty protects those who recognise Him and does not treat them like those who deny Him, those who miss His guidance and lose His friendship. 0 Allah! Thou who befriends Islam and its followers! Keep us firmly on Islam until we meet Thee with this faith.

69.- We allow prayer behind every pious or sinful pers among the people of the Qibla. Similarly, we deem it permissible to pray the funeral prayer over both of them.

70.- We do not declare anyone of them as a dweller of Paradise or Hell-fire, nor do we label them with infidelity or idolatry or hypocrisy unless any of these characteristics is very apparent in them. We leave their hidden characters to Allah

71.- We do not approve of the killing of anyone from among the followers of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) except those who deserved it according to the Shari'ia.

In General

72.- We do not approve of rebellions against our Imams and rulers, even though they may act unjustly. We do not pray against them, nor do we refuse to obey them. We hold that obedience to them is part of obedience to Allah, as long as they do not command the committing of sins. We pray to Allah that He may guide and forgive them.

73.- We follow the Sunnah and abide by the Jama'at and keep away from dissension, disagreement and partition.

74.- We love the people of justice and trust and despise those of tyranny and betrayal.

75.- We say "Allah knows best" whenever we are in doubt.

76.- We allow the rubbing of moccasins (or boots of soft leather, used as socks) during ablution, both while travelling and when at home, in accordance with the Hadith.

77.- Hajj and Jihad should both be carried out under guidance of the people of authority among Muslims, regardless of their being pious or wrongdoers, until the Day of Judgement. Nothing can suspend or nullify them.

78.- We believe in Kiraman Katibin (i.e. the angels who commissioned to record whatever we utter or do), Allah Almighty also made them protectors over us.

79.- We believe in the angel of death who is commissioned to take away the souls of everyone.

80.- We believe in the chastisement of the grave concerning those who deserve it. We believe that two angels known as Munkar and Nakir question everyone in their graves about the Creator, the religion and the Prophet in accordance with the Ahadith of the Prophet (Peace Upon Him) and sayings of the Companions.

81.- The grave is either a garden from the gardens Paradise, or a ditch from the ditches of Hell.

82.- We believe in the resurrection and the requital of deeds. We believe in the presentation of deeds (to Allah), the account, the reading of everyone's record, the reward, the punishment, the bridge (over the Hell-fire), and the scale.

83.- Both the Jannah (Paradise) and Hell-fire are created. They will never perish or come to an end. Allah created both of them before the creatures and created those who will dwell therein. He will admit whom He will into Paradise out of His Grace, or into the Hell-fire out of His Justice. Everyone does what he is supposed to do and everyone is heading towards what was created for him.

84.- Both evil and good are destined for mankind.

85.- Ability to do something is of two kinds: (i) Tawfiq: Grace from Allah which enables a person to carry out a command or to abstain from something forbidden. It is always connected with a specific action and does not exist before the action. It cannot be attributed to creatures, as they have no control over it. (ii) Ability due to health, variety of means, access to them, and the use of body organs. This type of ability precedes a specific action. A person is held responsible for a command if he has this ability, as Allah says in the Quran:

"On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear". (2:286)

(The passage is translated freely as the original is too complicated.).

86.- People's actions are created by Allah but earned by themselves.

87.- Allah Almighty has only asked people to do what they can manage. They themselves are not able to do anything except what he has enabled them to do.[10] This is what is meant by: There is no movement or power except by Allah-"We say that no one can turn himself away from sin except with the assistance of Allah. No one has any power at all to carry out an act of obedience to Allah and to remain firm on it, except by the grace of Allah.

88.- Everything happens by the Will of Allah, His Knowledge, His Decree and His Pre-estimation. His will has dominated those of others, and has changed them completely. His Decree has overpowered the planning of all others. He does what He like. He is never unjust.

'He cannot be questioned about His acts, But they will be questioned (about theirs)." (21:23)

89.- The dead benefit from the deeds of their lives, such as prayer and acts of charity.

90.- Allah Almighty responds to the prayers and fulfils the needs.

91.- He owns everything. None owns Him. No one can be needless of Him, even for one blink of an eye. The one who thinks of himself in no need of Allah, even for the blink of an eye, commits infidelity and perishes.

92.- Allah Almighty becomes angry and is pleased, but His anger and pleasure are not like those of a creature.

93.- We love the companions of the Messenger of Allah(PBUH). Our love for any one of them does not exceed that for any others, and neither do we reject any of them. We hate those who despise them or talk of them disrespectfully. We talk of them with repect. Love f or them is a sign of faith, conviction and piety, and hatred for them is nothing but infidelity, hypocrisy and tyranny.

94.- We hold that the first right Khalifa after the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, as he was the most Preferable person of this Ummah. After him, it was right for Umar ibn Al-Khattab, then Uthman. and finally Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with them all. They are the rightly-guided Khulafa and Imams.

95.- We testify that those ten Companions who were given the great tidings of Paradise by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) with their names, are the dwellers of Paradise because of the testimony of the Prophet, who was always true in his saying. They are:

Abu Bakr Al-Zubair ibn AI-Awwam Umar ibn Khattab Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas Uthman ibn Affan Sa'id ibn Zaid Ali ibn Abi Talib Abdul Rahman ibn Auf Talha ibn Ubaidullah

Abu Ubaida ibn al-Jarrah who is known as the Amin (trustworthy) among this Ummah. May Allah be pleased with them all.

96.- Absolved from hypocrisy is the one who speaks well of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah and of his wives who were clean from any impurity and of his offspring who were purified from all dirt.

97.- No one among the early scholars and those who followed them, whether in the field of narrating the sayings and events, or in the field of understanding and thinking, should be mentioned except in a proper way. Whoever speaks ill of them is not on the right path.

98.- We do not give preference to any Wali over any of the Prophets (A.S.). We say that a single Prophet is preferable to all Awlia.

99.- We believe in whatever has been reported of their. Karamat (i.e. unusual happenings) and whatever is authentically conveyed of their sayings.

100.- We believed in the signs proceeding the Hour, such as the advent of Dajjal, the descent of Isa ibn Maryam from Heaven, the rising of the sun from the west, the appearance of a subterranean beast from its place.

101.- We do not believe in any soothsayers, sorcerers, or anyone who claims anything contrary to the Book and Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah.

102.- We hold that to be united as Jamaat is the true and right way, whereas disunity and partition are misleading and destructive.

103.- In the heaven and the earth, the Deen of Allah is one, i.e Islam. Allah says:

"Verily, Deen with Allah is Islam" (2:19) And He says: "And I have chosen for you Islam as your Deen" (5:3)

104.- Islam is between the extremes of: * Exceeding the limit or falling short of it (anything or commandment). * Comparing Allah to creatures or stripping him of His attributes. * Human beings as bound to do what is destined or totally free to do what they like. * NOT fearing the Punishment of Allah or totally despairing Of His mercy.

105.- This is our Deen and belief, in open and in the depths of the heart. We absolve ourselves to Allah from anyone already expounded and explained by us. We pray to Allah Almighty to guide us firmly on the path, to let us die on it, to protect us from the opposing and contradicting views, and from disparaging factions such as:

Mushabbiha: -those who compare Allah to creatures.

Mu'tazila: - those who deviate from the way of early scholars as far as the interpretation Of the attributes of Allah are concerned.

JahmiYya: - those who negate the attributes of Allah.

Jabriyya: - those who believe that Man is bound to do what is destined, with no free will of his own.

Qadariyya: - those who believe that Man is completely free to do what he likes. All of these went against the people Of Sunnah and Jama'at and so misled themselves. We absolve ourselves from them, as they have deviated from the right path to that of destruction.

And with Allah lies all strength and Taufiq (capability).

Footnotes of Al-Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Baaz

(1) The Tawheed with which Allah commissioned His Prophets and which He explained in His scriptures is of three kinds; this is in accordance with the Book, the Sunnah and the state of mankind itself.

A) TAWHEED UR RUBUBIYYAH This is to believe in the Oneness of Allah regarding His actions. In other words, Allah is the sole Creator, Nourisher and Maintainer of His creatures affairs, exercising complete freedom in all their matters of this world and of the Hereafter without the aid of any partners.

As He says Himself: **'Allah is the Creator of all things." (Zumar 39:62)** And He says:

"Verily your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He established Himself on the Throne."(Yunus 10:3)

Even the polytheists, those who worshipped idols, recognized this form of Tawheed, although they rejected the idea of resurrection. However, they were not regarded as Muslims because they associated gods with Allah, worshipped many deities beside Him, and refused to accept the Messenger Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

B)TAWHEED UL ULUHIYYAH This is the type which was totally rejected by the polytheists. Allah Almighty says:

"So they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves! And the Unbelievers say, 'This is a sorcerer telling lies! as he made gods (all) into one God? Truly this is a strange thing!'." (Saad 38:4-5)

The Quran contains a number of other similar verses. Tawheed in this regard requires that a person should direct all forms of worship to Allah alone since Allah alone deserves to be worshipped and hence to worship someone else is totally false. In fact this is what "La Ilaha Illallah" means, i.e. there is none to be truly worshipped except Allah, as He said:

"That is because Allah -He is the Reality; and those besides Him whom they invoke, they are but vain Falsehood". (AI-Hajj 22:62)

C) TAWHEED UL ASMA WAS SIFAT (Tawheed in names and attributes) This is to believe in all those names and attributes of Allah which occur in the Book of Allah and in the authentic sayings of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him); to believe in them in a way most appropriate to His Being without altering any of His attributes, negating any of them, understanding any of them in an anthropomorphic way (i.e. by attributing a human shape to Allah), or interpreting His names and attributes figuratively. This is in line with the following ayaat of the Quran:

"Say: He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him." (Ikhlas 112:1 - 4)

And He says: "There is nothing whatever like unto Him. And He is the One, that hears and sees." (Shura 42:1 1)

And He says: "The most beautiful names belong to Allah : so call on Him by them." (A'raf 7:180)

And He says: "To Allah applies the highest similitude: for He is the Exalted in power, Full of Wisdom." (Nahl 16:60)

The Highest Similitude (AI Mathal ul A'la) means the best description of Him, free of any defect. This is what the people of Sunnah and Jama'ah from among the Companions of the Prophet (peace Be Upon Him) and their Successors believed. They understood the attributes of Allah from the Quran and the Sunnah without any attempt to imagine the physical shape of Him, and at the same time absolved Him of any resemblance to any of His creatures. Their mode of expression is in harmony with all the evidence from the Book and the Sunnah and thus shuts the door in the face of their opponents. They are indeed the ones mentioned in the following verse and we pray to Allah to count us among them by His grace and favour, for He alone is the One to be turned to for help:

"The vanguard (of Islam) - the first of the Muhajireen (those who forsook their homes) and of the Ansar (those who gave them aid), also those who follow them in good deeds - Allah is well pleased with them, as they are with Him: for them He has prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever; that is the supreme Triumph." (Tauba 9:100)

(2) The phrase Qadeem bila lbtida' ("Old with no beginning") did not occur among the Best Names of Allah as pointed out by a number of scholars. It was first mentioned by the scholars of Kalam in an effort to prove Allah's existence before anything else. Let it be known that the Names of Allah are of a divine origin. Only those names for which there is evidence in the Quran and the authentic Sunnah can be used for Allah. They cannot be introduced into the Islamic vocabulary simply at one's whim, and this has been clearly understood by the Imams of the pious predecessors. In fact, the word Qadeem does not even denote the meaning which the people of Kalam wished to express. In Arabic, it means something preceding another, though it is itself preceded by nothing, such as in the saying of Allah:

"Till she (the moon) returns like the old lower part of a date-stalk. (Ya Sin 36:39)

Although the addition of bila ibtidda' makes the meaning crystal clear, it is not valid to be counted among the best Names of Allah because there is no proof for it in the Book or the Sunnah. Instead, Allah's name al-Awwal (the First) expresses this idea better, as shown in His saying:

"He is the First and the Last." (Hadeed 57:3)

(3) This phrase can be exploited at face value by those who are obsessed with twisting the meaning or who got out of their way to interpret the names and attributes of Allah. Yet they have no argument because the author (may Allah have mercy on him) uses this expression to absolve the Creator from resembling His Creatures. Anyway, this brief statement needs explanation in order to remove all lingering doubts.

By hudood (limits) the author means such as known by humans since no one except Allah Almighty knows his limits. Thus Allah the Exalted has said:

"He knows what is before or after or behind them, but they shall comprehend Him not. " (Ta Ha 20:110)

Those among the pious predecessors who spoke of a limit with regard to His attribute of istawa, meant a limit known to Allah only and not known by people. As for al-ghayaaat wal arkan wal a'da' wal adawaat (the ends, columns, the organs and the utensils), the author means that Allah is absolved in His divine attributes and wisdom from resembling any of His creatures. Allah has the attributes of face, hand and foot etc., these attributes of His in no way resemble those of His creatures. No one except Allah knows their true nature.

The people of innovation use such expressions in order to negate some of the attributes of Allah. They use words other than those approved by Allah in order to avoid being exposed by the scholars of Islam. The author, al-Tahawi, undoubtedly did not mean this because he holds the same belief as that of Ahl-us-Sunnah as far as the attributes of Allah are concerned.

Whatever he says about belief can be better understood by his own sayings which explain what is briefly stated in other places.

Similarly, his saying "The six directions do not surround Him like all other innovations" means the six created directions. He does not means the negation of Allah being above His creation and established on His throne because His position is not covered by the six directions, as He is above this universe and surrounding it. Allah made His servants instinctively believe that He is above them as maintained by the consensus of the Ahl-ul-Sunnah-wal-Jam'ah among the Companions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and their Successors. All the evidence from the Book and the authentic Mutawatir Sunnah prove that He is in the direction above us. Dear reader, be alert to this point which is the sole truth and anything else is falsehood.

(4) By al-'ilm al-mafqood (lost knowledge) he means the knowledge of the Unseen. This is only for Allah Allmighty. Whoever among the human beings claims to possess it is an infidel because Allah Almighty says: " With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He." (An'am 6:59)

And He says: "Say: None on the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows what is hidden.". (Naml 27:65)

Also, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said: "The keys of the Unseen are five, not known to anyone except Allah Then he recited the following verse:

"Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow. Nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things)." Luqman (31:34)

There are a number of authentic Ahadith which prove that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) did not know the Unseen although he was the best of the creatures and master of the Messengers. Other beings can thus only be ignorant of it.

The Prophet (Peace Re Upon Him) knew only that which Allah made known to him: when some people slandered Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) he did not know that she was totally innocent of their accusations until revelation came to him; Aisha's necklace was lost during a journey, he sent a party to look for it and was unaware of where it was until they made the camel stand and found it under the animal.

There are a number of other evidences from the Book and the Sunnah on this issue.

(5) Here he means that the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah do not label a Muslim as an infidel as long as he believes in Allah and the Last Day, because of a sin he commits such as

adultery, drinking, dealing in interest, disobeying the parents, ctc. as long as he does not consider them as lawfull.'Once he regards them as lawful, he is definitely an infidel because he has rejected Allah and his Prophet (Peace be Upon him) and has come out of the pale of Islam. However, if he does not regard them as Halal, he is not an infidel in the eyes of Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah but will be counted as a person weak in faith. He will be liable for the appropriate punishment given to a fasiq(sinner), as described in the purified Shari'a.

This is the belief of the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah unlike the Khawarij and the Mu'tazilah and those who followed their false way. As for, the Khawarij, they declare a Muslim as an infidel because of the sins he commited. As for the Mu'tazilah, they Place such a person in a position between Islam and infidelity in this world but they believe that such a person will abide eternally in the hell-fire, just like the belief of the Khawarij. The sayings Of these two factions is totally false in the light of the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus of the pious predecessors. Some people seem to be confused about them out Of ignorance but it has never been a matter of doubt to the people of truth.

(6) The author means that we do not testify that they are among the people of Paradise except those for whom the Prophet (Peace Upon Him) himself testified, such as the ten and others as explained later in his statement. It should be known that the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah believe that the believers and the muttaqeen will in general enter Paradise an that the infidels and polytheists and hypocrites will in general enter the Hell fire. This is proved by a number of verses and mutawatir ahadeeth of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), e.g.

"As to the Righteous they will be in gardens, and in happiness. "(Tur 52:17)

And He says: "Allah has promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein ... " (Tauba 9:72)

And about non-believers He says: "But those who reject (Allah). for them will be the fire of Hell; no term shall be determined for them so they should die, nor shall its punishment be lightened for them. Thus do we reward every ungrateful one!" (Fatir 35:36)

And He says: "The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire; no helper will you find for them." (Nisa' 4:14-5)

(7) Such a narrow definition is not without criticism. An infidel enters into the fold of Islam by pronuuncing two Shahadah if he had not previously said them. If he had said them before but had then committed an offence which caused his infidelity, he can re-enter Islam by repenting.

"To deny what made him enter Islam" is not the only reason for apostasy. The scholars have included other acts under the banner of apostasy such as criticising Islam or the

Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), making fun of Allah, His Messenger, His Book, or any part of the Sharia'a, in line with the saying of Allah:

"Say: 'Was it at Allah, and His Signs, and His Messenger, that you were mocking? Make no excuses: you have rejected faith after you had accepted it'." (Tauba 9:65 - 66)

The case is similar with the people who worship idols or invoke the dead to help them or meet their demands, since all of this contradicts the shahadah " " which requires that all forms worship including supplication, asking help, bowing, prostrating, sacrifice, vow, etc. should be directed to Allah. Whoever worships something other than Allah, be it idols or angels or jinn or the dead commits shirk and falls short of maintaining the requirements of " La ilaha illallah ". All such matters are not necessarily the denial of what a person confirmed on entering Islam, but nevertheless take him/ out of the pale of Islam as proved by the Book and the Sunnah. There are a number of other issues not related to denial which render a Muslim an infidel; these are mostly discussed in detail by the scholars under "apostasy" and the reader may refer to them if wishes.

(8) This definition is inadequate and objectionable; the correct course is the one followed by the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah who say that iman (faith) consists of belief, speech and actions collectively, all which increase with obedience, and decrease with disobedience, to Allah. The evidence for this from the Book and the Sunnah is almost too numerous to be counted, but the reader may check some of this evidence which is mentioned by the commentator lbn Abi Al'iz.

Separating action from faith is the important principle of the Murjia. The dispute between them and the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah is not merely to do with the choice of words but it also concerned with the concept, to which many issues are related, These issues can be gauged by reflecting on the sayings of the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah and of the Murjia.

(9) His statement that faith is one and that all faithful people are basically equal is highly objectionable; indeed, it is completely false. Believers have greatly differing levels of faith; the faith of the Prophets was not the same as the faith of others just as the faith of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the rest of the Companions (RAA) was not equal to the faith of others. In the same way, the faith of true believers is not the same as that of sinners. The dissimilarity is thus based on the amount of knowledge contained in the heart of each person about Allah, His Names and Attributes, and what He has enjoined on His servants. This is the saying of the Ahl-us-Sunnah-wal-Jama'ah and is thus in conflict with the Murjia.

(10) This is not true; in fact, the people are able to do much more than they have been required to do by Allah because He, out of His grace and kindness, wished to make things easy for his servants and not to make their deen oppressive.